

## **Acronyms & Abbreviations in Emergency Management**

By David Schulz

LEPC, PDM, EMP, CCC, DHS, EMS, BSTPC, SCMIC, FEMA, ODP, DES, PPE, DHS, WMD and so many other references are common discussion items in Madison County's Local Emergency Planning Committee activities this winter. Looking through those abbreviations, I wonder if there should not be some type of test or competition for anyone who can get the most correct.

During the last several months, the interest in the LEPC has been very much enhanced. Representatives from most fire departments, ambulance services, hospitals, as well as the Sheriff's Department, Public Health Department, DES office and members of the public are working in concert to improve emergency services. Madison County Director of Emergency Management, Frank Ford, recently stated, "I am very encouraged at the many persons from around the County who have stepped up to help provide better, more collaborative emergency services operations throughout the County. I feel the benefit of coordinated planning, improved equipment, joint training opportunities and other assistance is providing these emergency service units incentive to continue as part of this effort." Further, he went on to say, "The work we have done in Madison County is beyond most other Counties throughout the State. The funding through Homeland Security and from other sources is being used to improve equipment, buildings, training, and to respond to other vital needs throughout our emergency service area."

This program brings together all of the known emergency service interests and yet helps to profile and enhance some of those we may underestimate or overlook. Schools can become a mass injury facility, stores have needed supplies, airports are support for fire or emergency delivery, local contractors have equipment to move earth, and more. Further, we have learned there are many things we can significantly improve including county wide communications capability, the ability of all emergency organizations to communicate with one another, and coordinated planning and proper training for emergency personnel whether volunteer or professional.

These are all things the LEPC is working to improve in Madison County. The equally exciting thing we have noticed in the exercises and meetings is the sense of cooperation and willingness to make even greater things happen.

So, what do the above abbreviations mean:

- LEPC – Local Emergency Planning Committee - Every County and even the State must have one of these bringing all appropriate entities together. The Madison County LEPC meets the third Thursday of each month in open session in the County Court House.
- PDM – Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan - The document tries to determine how best to lessen the impact of disasters, should they occur. Th
- e Madison County LEPC and numerous sub-committees worked on the plan throughout the last 1 ½ years bringing emergency service entities together and availing the County for Homeland Security funds. Our PDM was recently recognized by the State DES as the second one completed in Montana.
- CCC – Citizen Corps Council - This is a newly formed and Homeland Security funded project that will expand public education, interest and involvement in preparation for emergencies and in emergency management and response.
- DHS – Department of Homeland Security - The topic we have been discussing in this article. Also, the Agency and process we have read about and observed on TV since 9-11. Frank Ford is the Administrator of Madison County's Department of Emergency Management which coordinates county activities with those of DHS at the state and national level.
- BSTPC – Big Sky Terrorism Prevention Consortium - This is a joint project of Madison County and Gallatin County aimed at assessing the threat of terrorism; determining our current anti-terrorism capabilities and planning how to improve our joint ability to prevent and respond to terrorism in the Big Sky area. The added bonus is that most of what we learn will be equally applicable to any natural disaster that might occur in that area as well.

- SCMIC – South Central Montana Interoperability Consortium – Most of us have heard or read of the difficulties encountered with communications during the disasters of 9 - 11 in New York and Washington DC. This is a five county cooperative effort to study our current public safety communications capabilities and plan how to improve them to maximize cooperative emergency management and response efforts in our area. The project will be based upon an exhaustive gathering of information from all of our emergency service people, professional and volunteer, which will be conducted over the next 6 months.
- FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency - You have probably heard of them. They are handlers of disaster relief for natural disasters, floods, fire, etc. (we have not been able to get them interested in drought to any extent, to date).
- ODP – Office of Domestic Preparedness - This is where most of the Homeland Security funds come through.
- DES – Disaster and Emergency Services - This is the department that used to be responsible for all this stuff. With the events of 9-11 and Homeland Security directives expanding who is in charge of what, LEPC is now the oversight and advisory body to the Commissioners and the County Department of Emergency Management. FEMA/DES, Public Health and ODP/DHS are all under the umbrella of this very bureaucratic and often confusing process.
- PPE – Personnel Protective Equipment - Those in Fire Departments, ambulances and so many other environments are familiar with PPE. This is one area that the LEPC of Madison County has already helped some departments with. Hazmat (hazardous materials) suits, boots, gloves, etc. were purchased and delivered. Also, training has been held regarding use of this PPE gear.
- WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction - We have all heard a great deal on this topic in the last year. Personally, I believe a jet in New York is a qualified WMD. In Madison County, we tell ourselves a WMD or other terrorist related act will not happen. I want to agree and certainly hope we are correct. However, experience throughout the world over recent years has shown that rural and isolated communities are not immune to this threat.

In the meantime, I continue to believe that we can use this as opportunity to expand our emergency management capability. The funding is available and we have established ourselves to benefit from these grants, etc. Further, who will get it if we don't?? When you visit with your fireman or deputy or EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) find out if this program is working in your area of the County.

The valuable thing about this whole process is that in the event the dam breaks or the wildfire threatens, whether natural or terrorist caused, the result and the reaction are very much the same. Hopefully, Madison County will be better prepared to cope with the situation because of the efforts of our emergency management and response teams and the many volunteers who have stepped up to this issue.

In the next article we will test you on the acronyms you learned today...